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# Gallery and Studio

## THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARTISTS.



THE ninth exhibition of the Society of American Artists is held in the handsome new gallery which Mr. Yandell has just erected at Nineteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and the gallery and the exhibition appear so well fitted to each other in every respect that it is probable that the conjunction may be repeated for many seasons to come. The collection of paintings is probably not much better than that of last year, but it strikes the spectator as so satisfactory, varied, and original that the general popular impression seems to be that it is the best that has yet been shown. There are no historical paintings at all, and no illustrations of certain sentimental quotations from the poets, as is so much the fashion in the English school; but there are plenty of landscapes and portraits, several decorative pieces, paintings of still-life and of the domestic genre. Mr. Dewing's much-discussed picture may possibly come under the head of religious painting as it has a scriptural title, but both the landscape and the graceful young Tobit, draping himself in his net, are better idealized, and more heavenly-minded, apparently, than the angel. The latter—a bony, ungraceful creature—comes forward in the middle of the picture draped in yellow and plucking at a harp, while he (or she) looks up to heaven with wide-open, watery blue eyes and a rapt expression. The beauty in color of the level meadow in which the scene takes place, and of the tender sky behind the figures, is admirable, and there is no other incident; the long, gray gulls' wings, which extend horizontally from behind the angel's back, complete the figure by giving it that certain grace of picturesque awkwardness which Mr. Dewing so well affects. Mr. Thayer's "Woman and Swan," which hangs near, is somewhat more complete in itself; the head of the Leda might have been more interesting, and her drawn-up right knee does not seem to be altogether necessary; but there is good science of painting displayed in the flesh color loaded on with a palette-knife until the necessary truth of color and (sufficient) accuracy of modelling is obtained. The swan is not very feathery in texture, but he is rounded and ponderable, and the subdued gray tones of the grassy bank complete a very handsome scheme of color. Kenyon Cox's large decorative group, enlarged from one of his designs in "The Blessed Damozel," is just a trifle empty, but is very good in color and dignified in character and composition. The Muse of Painting—who probably belongs to the Venetian school—sits nude, palette in hand, and the Muse of Poetry, draped in white, and with her back turned to her companion, thrums her harp absorbed in her own inspiration. At her feet is a laurel-wreath and at those of her sister some roses; behind both figures is a flat blue sky that sets off very well the flowing red hair of the nude figure. The other is much less graceful; she is open to criticism in the matter of the distance between her eyes, of the inelegance of her arms and hands, and of her too realistic feet. Mr. Cox's small picture of a naked—not nude—"Bacchante" might, with advantage, have been omitted from the exhibition.

Wyatt Eaton sends a beautiful little study of a nude "Reader," the property of Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, and La Farge appears with four characteristic works. "The Sphinx" is a curious little femininity sitting upon her haunches and with palpably useless butterfly wings growing out of her pretty shoulders; the "Lady of Shalott" drifts down the river through one of Mr. La Farge's variously-colored twilight landscapes, and in a boat that looks somewhat too much like a bath-tub; and the "Girl Reading" is a strong study, warm in color, of a head seen from behind, over the shoulder. Mr. Blashfield's "Tea Rose" is a pretty and ingenious arrangement of a young girl in a marble seat that suffers from lack of good drawing; and Mr. Millet's "Pompeian

Slave" is a study in reddish browns, the blonde hand-maiden carrying an earthen jar carefully on her shoulder. Of the few flower-pieces the best is Mr. Thayer's most charming roses, owned by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke.

The strongest feature of the exhibition is the display of portraits, which ranges through bronze and plaster and very varying styles of painting. Mr. Brewster's sketch-bust in plaster of Mr. Beckwith is a fair likeness, and Mr. Elwell's, of a young lady, is a rather better one. Mr. Dewing's little portrait of a lady in a gray dress, seen in profile, and mounted in a very handsome lace-work frame, is probably the most completely satisfying piece of workmanship in the collection—anything more complete, refined, and artistic it would be difficult to find in a modern gallery. Robert R. Brandegee has painted a portrait of Mr. Flagg, the artist, that has almost as many good qualities as Mr. Dewing's, and Alden Weir one of a young girl in a gray coat that is of his very best. His portrait of his brother, John F. Weir, is a strong study, the size of life, and with the conventional black background. Mr. Chase, the President of the Society, signs five canvases, which, as he exhibits his works on no other occasions, is not a large number, and none of these canvases are of the biggest. His smallest is a clever little decorative sketch made in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and owned by Mr. Clarke; three of his others are likenesses of various feminine sitters, one in gray furs, gracefully arranged against a lively red wall, one of a little girl in a white frock and twinkling black legs, and the third, in walking costume, holding her umbrella in one of those natural and spirited poses which this painter so often hits. A new-comer, Edmund C. Yarbelle, of Boston, sends a full-length portrait of a slender, intellectual-looking young woman in a black dress, with her hand resting on a little table, that is full of more than promise, and Mr. Rice exhibits another full-length portrait, of Miss Phoebe Russell, that is so ingenious in costume and color, so well-considered in all respects, that it is one of his best works. Mr. Bunker's comely young lady who sits at a table near by has not been so well considered; her dress is quite uninteresting, she seems to want something more about her neck, and something to do with her hands, and she sits in one of those conventional atmospheres of nothing but paint, of which our portrait-painters are so fond. Nevertheless, she is charming, and the spectator wishes that he knew her.

Mr. Thos. Eakins, of Philadelphia, who is always interesting—and sometimes aggravating—sends five contributions to the exhibition, of which two are portrait heads of men. Of these, one, at least, is so serious, so well observed, so conscientiously rendered as to make it a work of high artistic value; the two bronze panels, "Knitting" and "Spinning," are interesting chiefly with regard to the liberties which the artist has taken with his "field," pushing it in or pulling it out according to his convenience. In his portrait of a lady, with a dog lying at her feet, he has followed various theories of painting in different parts of the work, a very good one in rendering the dog, and an unfortunate one—of much consideration given to details and none to the general effect—when he came to the painting of the lady. Carroll Beckwith has but one theory, an excellent one, to paint as much like Velasquez as he can, with occasional variations à la Carolus-Duran. If he does not succeed altogether it is to be remembered that it has always been found difficult to paint as well as Velasquez did, and that the painter displays his intelligence in casting aside at once all the pretty, delusive, artistic fads that come between him and the moon at which he aims.

On the landscapes of the exhibition a chapter might be written; they are not very numerous, nor very big and important, and they are all placid and modern in spirit, but they illustrate very various individual ways of painting great nature. Homer Martin, for instance, in his picture, "Behind the Dunes, Lake Ontario," does well to give us a definite geographical title to his work, so great is his indifference to topographical details in his beautiful, mysterious, unreal-looking landscape; Walter Palmer, on the contrary, delineates his winter-scene with the exactness of a camera, and is content to supplement

his photograph with the real whites and grays and brittle, beautiful bluish-greens of icy winter. There are three entirely different theories of painting moonlight exemplified in the collection; Mr. Coffin's sober, accurate, learned modelling of his landscape, like a relief-map, with his back to the queen of night; Mr. Minor's more conventional, much less "true" rendering, which, nevertheless, contrives to get a good deal of the beauty and mystery of the occasion, which may be the most important thing after all; and Otto Stark's clever, somewhat tricky scheme which arrives at a very good painted counterfeit of the actual light and shadow.

Wm. L. Allen, in his "Five o' Clock," presents us in a French drawing-room with a wide expanse of darkly waxed floor, a few guests spotted about, and a nice little girl in the distance playing the violin; George Brush goes back to the unknown times of the Mexican and Central American civilizations and paints the Aztec sculptor chiselling his mysterious reliefs—this picture has already been described in our columns; and Jno. R. Stites goes still farther backward to the "Mesozoic Age," when the unfinished earth swarmed with vast reptiles. Mr. Carlsen, less imaginative, but an excellent painter, contents himself with every-day "Cod-Fish," "Still-Life" and "Cape Ann Sands," and Horatio Walker, still more prosaic, has done a beautiful little study of a "Barn-Yard" with pigs of an uncomfortable veracity.

## THE PARIS PASTEL EXHIBITION.

THE third annual exhibition of the Société des Pastellistes Français opened on April 2d in the gallery of the Rue de Sèze. Unfortunately, there is little good to be said of the show; like the Aquarellistes, the Paris Pastellistes seem to be in a state of decadence, with the exception of Albert Besnard and Léon Lhermitte. Mr. Besnard lays himself open to the reproach of getting too much amusement out of his art, in the sense that he produces quantities of studies which are always interesting, often charming, and invariably full of talent, but these studies do not lead to any serious work, any picture, any composition of lasting importance. In this exhibition Mr. Besnard is represented by eighteen studies in pastel, one of which is a pastel of a horse, life-size, standing in a farm-yard, which is also life-size. Léon Lhermitte exhibits half a dozen rustic scenes of mowing, reaping, gleanings and field labor which are most fascinating works, and two interior scenes, a family, and some dressmakers at work, which charm by their sincerity, their delicate observation and their very personal treatment. Lhermitte is decidedly a great artist in pastel and charcoal. But, with the exception of Besnard and Lhermitte, whom can we mention with praise out of the twenty exhibitors? Madeleine Lemaire, of course, for her talent is acknowledged; Paul Hellen, perhaps, for his submission to the influence of Sargent; Cazin, for some landscapes which he could have treated equally well in oil-painting. Gervex, Duez and François Flameng do not improve their reputation by their pastels. Émile Lévy and Dubufe give dazzling proof in reds and blues of the irremediable vulgarity of their natures. Nozal sends twenty landscapes to show that we have been over-rating him. But, enough: it is useless to particularize. The general impression of the third exhibition of the Société des Pastellistes is that it is mediocre and disappointing. TH. CHILD.

AN anonymous circular has been received, calling our attention to the fact that bills have been introduced into both the National and the State Legislatures making it a felony to publish advertisements relating to "disgusting" maladies, and asking our assistance to defeat the measure. So far from being willing to render such aid, we hope sincerely, in the interests of common decency, that the crusade will be successful. It is our inviolable rule to refuse admittance to our columns of patent medicines of any kind; and, so far as we know, The Art Amateur is the only publication in the United States that lives up to this rule.